

**SPEECH BY GUEST-OF-HONOUR, DR TAN SEE LENG, MINISTER FOR
MANPOWER AND SECOND MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY AT THE
INDUCTION COMITIA OF THE ACADEMY OF MEDICINE, SINGAPORE ON
7 OCTOBER 2023, 2PM, AT THE GRAND COTHORNE WATERFRONT HOTEL**

Associate Professor Alan Ng,
Master of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore;
Past Masters, Council Members of the Academy;
Fellows, Colleagues and Friends;
Ladies and Gentlemen

INTRODUCTION

1. A very good afternoon. It is my pleasure to be here with you at the Induction Comitia of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore.
2. Today, we witness the conferment of new inductees as Fellows of the Academy. My heartiest congratulations to all of you. My congratulations also to the graduates of the Master of Health Professions Education as well as the Annals Reviewer Award winners.

ROLE OF THE ACADEMY IN SHAPING NATIONAL HEALTHCARE AGENDA

3. To the new Fellows of the Academy, you have now become part of one of the most distinguished and established medical fraternity in Singapore. From a pioneering group of 34 members at its founding in 1957, the Academy of Medicine, Singapore has flourished to have over 4,200 members across 13 Colleges and 6 Chapters.

4. In 1975, during the Induction Comitia, then Guest of Honour Mr Lee Kuan Yew remarked: “The Academy of Medicine stands for Standards of Excellence”. He astutely noted that such aspirations were not easy to attain, as the academy would have to surpass the already high standards set by the medical profession in Singapore .”¹.

5. Today, 48 years later, it brings me great pleasure to acknowledge the Academy has proven itself and played a significant role in maintaining the excellence of healthcare in Singapore.

6. The Academy has been unwavering in its commitment to advancing the art and science of medicine in Singapore. It offers postgraduate specialist training, upholding stringent standards of competency and ethical integrity through continuous professional development, while generously sharing crucial health information and knowledge with the public.

7. For instance, the Academy receives numerous requests for expert opinions on professional and clinical practice from various authorities and agencies, such as the Ministry of Health, Singapore Medical Council, Singapore Police Force, Singapore Courts and Coroner. Fellows invest significant time in researching and reviewing of data to prepare reports in response to these requests.

8. Even though the number of requests has been growing steadily over the years, the Academy remains dedicated to supporting the demands for competent,

¹ Annals, Academy of Medicine, October 1975, Vol 4. No 4.

independent medical experts by recommending suitable professionals to governmental agencies through the Faculty of Medical Experts.

9. The role of the Academy and its services will continue to evolve, but I firmly believe that the Academy will persist in its pursuit of excellence. Every one of you here, as Fellows, has a role to play in this journey.

HEALTHIER SG - HEALTHCARE IS A SYSTEM; COMMUNITIES ARE IMPORTANT

10. 2023 is a defining year in Singapore's healthcare history. In July, my colleague, Minister for Health, Mr Ong Ye Kung launched Healthier SG in preparation for Singapore's ageing demographic.

11. Healthier SG shifts our emphasis from reactive to preventive care: proactively empowering residents to stay healthy, detect health issues early, and manage them well. It positions primary care providers as the bedrock of healthcare and leverages the extensive network of the family medicine physicians.

12. But family medicine physicians do not work alone. With medical practice becoming increasingly specialised and complex, more patients are dealing with multiple comorbidities, leading to referrals from one specialist to another. Specialists across all disciplines must collaborate closely with primary care practitioners to ensure the best health outcomes for our residents.

13. The Academy serves as a platform for doctors to collaborate, pooling their expertise and experiences. As specialists in your respective fields and Fellows of the

Academy, I have every confidence that together, you can achieve optimal health outcomes for your patients.

CONCLUSION

14. Today, Singapore provides some of the best medical care in the world. Since 2000, Singapore has consistently ranked as the 6th best health system according to the World Health Organisation. The Economist Intelligence Unit also placed Singapore 2nd out of 166 countries for healthcare outcomes, while the Bloomberg Global Health Index rated us as the 4th healthiest country in the world.

15. The Government will continue to invest in our healthcare infrastructure and expand its capacity. We are also dedicated to training more doctors nurses and allied health workers, ensuring they are equipped with the latest skills sets and technical knowledge to deliver the best care to our patients.

16. But I believe that improvements in healthcare are not just driven by hardware investments or KPIs (key performance indicators). They are fundamentally propelled by passion. We know that Medicine is a calling - a calling that comes from your heart, rooted in deep empathy and care for people.

17. Stay true to your calling, and I am sure you will not only meet but exceed expectations, finding fulfilment in your journey as medical practitioners.

18. With that, let me once again extend my heartfelt congratulations to inductees, graduates and award recipients.

19. I wish you all a pleasant afternoon.